



# State of Wisconsin GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

## Meeting Minutes

Final - as of 1/20/11

**Friday, October 29, 2010**

Lussier Heritage Center, Capital Springs State Recreation Area

10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**State Trails Council Members Present:** Ken Carpenter, Randy Harden, Tom Huber, Jim Joque, Skip Maletzke, Mike McFadzen, Dave Phillips, Robbie Webber

**State Trails Council Members Not In Attendance:** Tom Thornton

**WI DNR Staff Present:** Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Tim Parsons, Joseph Warren

**Others Present:** Alex Bub, Doug Johnson, Roger Kussman, Rob McConnell, Bryan Much, Dave Peterson, Judy Peterson, Gene Roberts, Luana Schneider, John Schnorr

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### 10:00 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of August meeting minutes

- Harden called the meeting to order. Motion for approval of the August 6, 2010 meeting minutes by McFadzen. Seconded by Maletzke. Minutes approved.

### 10:10 A.M. – Chair Report

- When a new Governor is in office the STC will contact the new Governor and staff to introduce proposed changes to the structure of the council and request coordination with the Governor's office on new appointments.

### 10:15 A.M. – State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Equestrian.* The summer season is ending and overall it was a good year. Carpenter will be attending the National Trails Symposium in Chattanooga, Tennessee in November. The horse trail design school held over the summer at the Eau Galle Recreation Area was very successful and well-attended.
- *Tourism/Business.* The Tourism Federation of Wisconsin is working with state and private groups to increase spending on tourism marketing. It is estimated that it will take 3-5 years for travel and lodging occupancy rates to return to peak 2007 levels. Phillips stated on a trip to the Superior Hiking Trail, lodging was full months in advance. Maletzke stated that popular destinations and select areas were still seeing very good occupancy rates.
- *Off-Highway Vehicles.* ATV numbers are slowly coming back. There are currently 22 counties participating in the UTV Pilot Program. Groups are waiting until after the election to introduce 4WD Truck and Off-Highway Motorcycle registration programs. Polaris is developing a new electric ATV, and is working on upgrading the battery technology. WATVA has been asked to test an electric UTV. WATVA's Trail Patrol Ambassador program will begin its 11th year. Some issues have come up with towns opening roads to ATV use which may or may not link to existing ATV routes. Management of this issue may need to come from law enforcement.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* Youth groups and ski clubs are beginning fall dry-land training. The Telemark Lodge that hosts the American Birkebeiner still has some financial issues it is trying to resolve before the next event in February 2011. It remains closed at this time. The Chequamegon Fat Tire Festival also uses the same resort. Joque stated the National Snowshoe Championships will be held in Cable, Wisconsin in



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March 2011. Warming shelters and lighted trails are key pieces of a property's facilities and bring more people out for winter recreation, but can also be used for other activities. Biermeier stated that plans are underway for the remodeling of the cabin at Mirror Lake and for an addition to the shelter at Lapham Peak. Blue Mound received a donation this month to construct a shelter at the state park.

- *Users with Disabilities.* Joque stated the AmericanTrails.org website is a very good source of information for all trail users, with links to state agencies and the National Park Service. The website also has a comprehensive section on accessible trails and ADA information.
- *Bicycling.* Work is progressing on the Hank Aaron State Trail in Milwaukee. The final section of the Badger State Trail was recently completed and is open. Webber has been working on a project for a U.S. interstate bike route system, for long-distance biking, through Wisconsin with most current proposed routes to follow the state rail trails. The 2010 Pro Walk/Pro Bike Conference was held in Chattanooga in September. Communities located along the proposed high speed rail route between Madison and Milwaukee would like a way for bikers to roll on and off the trains.
- *Department of Transportation.* Transportation Enhancements and the Bike and Ped Facilities Program were awarded to projects across the state in October. Award winners and information are available on the DOT website. The programs were able to fund 40-45% of the submitted projects with most being trail projects. The DOT completed an updated bicycle map of Wisconsin in August. The new maps will be available on the DOT website by county, through the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, and at bicycle shops. The DOT has finished administrative rules for the Complete Streets law passed in 2009, and held workshops over the summer.

### 11:00 A.M. – Implementation of Recommendations for Improving the Structure of the STC

- The Council reviewed drafted updates to the STC website (with recommendations from the STC Ad Hoc Committee). Joque requested that information on accessibility to meetings be added for persons with disabilities who may need special accommodations, and also to make sure the website itself is accessible. Carpenter requested the page link to additional trails information such as the DOT bike maps. Also requested to add to the STC Application, advisory (non-voting seats), fax number, and instructions on using electronic forms. Motion to move forward with the website by Huber. Seconded by Phillips. Motion passed. Brown and Warren will make the requested updates to the website.  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/trails/council/index.html>
- The STC agreed to form an ad hoc (temporary) Bylaws Subcommittee to review possible Bylaw Revisions as identified by the Ad Hoc Structure Committee. Phillips, Joque and Webber will serve on the subcommittee, and Phillips will chair the subcommittee. The subcommittee will introduce some possible bylaws revisions for consideration at the January STC meeting.
- The STC also agreed to form an Application Review Subcommittee to review applications for vacant STC positions. The subcommittee would receive applications and follow the STC Application Process approved at the August 2010 STC meeting. Carpenter, McFadzen and Maletzke will serve on the subcommittee and Carpenter (as the STC vice-chair) will chair the subcommittee. The application will be posted online and the subcommittee can begin to review applications for STC open seats.

### 1:00 P.M. – DNR Report

- The Capital Springs State Recreation Area Master Plan was approved by the Natural Resources Board in October. Capital Springs was purchased as a Centennial State Park along with Governor Thompson State Park. At Governor Thompson, a new entrance station will be opening in November and a new campground will be opening in summer 2011. Other master plans in progress include Point Beach State



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Forest, Copper Falls and High Cliff state parks, and the Cross Plains Ice Age Reserve. Construction of the entrance road to Rib Mountain State Park is nearing completion and will include a slightly wider roadway with a bike access lane and a new paved access path for walkers and hikers. The NRB approved the purchase of more than 2700 acres of land along the Menominee River in northeast Wisconsin. The DNR will work to manage the area as a rustic, water-based property, available to different types of recreation.

- The State Park System has seen an increase in the number of requests to hold special events such as races, athletic events and other activities on state land. Biermeier asked the Council to provide their comments on what the importance of holding these events is to users groups, on any issues of concern, and on the potential for these events to affect or displace other users. A summary of comments included:
  - Events can take a lot of time and labor for the land manager. Volunteer labor or the event requestor may need to do a lot of the pre- and post-work. Reasonable entrance or participation costs may be asked to offset costs to the property.
  - Communication is important. The event organizer and land manager should put out a public notice and inform hotels, adjacent land owners, and displaced users. Consider holding a public meeting.
  - The impact on the natural resources should be taken into consideration. Consider a limit on participant numbers.
  - Signage, maps and directions for the event are important for both participants and other users that may be displaced.
  - The trail/land should be required to be returned to the original condition if it is damaged during the event.
  - The proximity of other opportunities in the area may determine the holding of an event. Are there other opportunities nearby for displaced users? Are there other opportunities nearby to hold the event?
  - Consider closing the course for a race/event or holding the event for only part of the day versus the entire day if there will be an issue with different uses.
  - Event organizers may need to acquire a bond or insurance.
  - Events can bring families out on trails that might not otherwise come out together.
  - Events impact tourism and can be a big draw to the area, benefitting the local economy.
- A list of suggested appointees for the Nonmotorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council were selected with the assistance of several STC members and partners. The list has been submitted to the Governor's Office.
- The DNR continues to work internally and externally to craft clear guidance on water regulations for trail projects. A draft is expected to be available this spring.

### **1:30 P.M. – Public Comment**

- Doug Johnson, Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) President, updated the council on some snowmobiling issues. AWSC is partnering with the University of Wisconsin on an economic impact study of snowmobiling in the state. Youth involvement in snowmobiling is steadily improving. AWSC gave a presentation at the 2010 International Snowmobile Congress in Iowa. DNR representatives put on a snowmobile safety class at the annual fall workshop. Johnson asked if the DOT still produces a statewide snowmobiling map. There are not hard copies in print, but other mapping sources have current snowmobile trail information.



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- Bryan Much updated the council on some issues relating to off-highway motorcycles. Much has published some photo essays of Michigan's Upper Peninsula and other areas. The Michigan mountain bike community has also inquired about a cooperative trail effort between off-road bicyclists and off-highway motorcyclists. Off-highway motorcyclists worked with private land owners to hold a dual-sport ride in Cross Plains in October.
- Dave Peterson stated that of the events he has been a part of, communication, public notices, and signing have all been important aspects to holding the events.
- Luana Schneider with the Wisconsin 4WD Association stated the annual March of Dimes Rally in Taylor County was cancelled due to rain this year, but still received more than \$8,000 for the March of Dimes. Schneider asked if there was an update on a motorized recreation area. The DNR is continuing to look at potential sites.
- Rob McConnell stated the ORV Council has been discussing the increasing number of trails affected by rainfall events. Trails that have been updated or constructed correctly, such as the recent improvements in the Black River State Forest, have not been washed away.
- Gene Roberts, with Human Powered Trails (HPT) stated HPT is continuing to work with the DNR on the issue of bike access to lands purchased with Stewardship funds. HPT has met with grant managers and other DNR staff to look at different proposals.

### **1:45 P.M. – 2011 Meeting Dates**

- Thursday, January 20, 2011, 10-12 p.m. (Teleconference)
- Tuesday, April 5, 2011, 10-3 p.m. (State Capitol Building)
- Friday, July 8, 2011, 10-3 p.m. (Mead Wildlife Area)
- Friday, October 28, 2011, 10-3 p.m. (Black River State Forest)

### **1:55 P.M. – 2011 Officer Elections**

- Huber presented a slate of officers for 2011: Randy Harden – chair, Ken Carpenter – vice-chair, Robbie Webber – secretary. Phillips motioned to accept the nominations, seconded by McFadzen. Motion passed.

### **2:00 P.M. – Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Update**

- Tim Parsons, DNR Financial Assistance Specialist and RTP Grant Manager spoke with the council. The STC approved a \$30,000 cap on RTP grants which has allowed several more projects to receive funds than in past years. Grant staff will be looking to have RTP funds in house so project sponsors may receive money at the beginning of the construction season.
- Carpenter stated it would be helpful if the grant award winners could be sorted by trail use type. Some groups may feel encouraged to apply for RTP funds if they see similar trail users have received grants. Parsons will sort the award winners by allowable uses identified in the applications and resend the list to the council.
- Parsons will outline a list of options for the council to review and consider for two questions; keeping the cap at \$30,000 or raising the limit, and how to distribute excess funds. Parsons will outline the options and send to the council for the January meeting.

### **2:30 P.M. – Adjourn**

- Motion to adjourn by Phillips. Seconded by McFadzen. Meeting adjourned.